Firefighter rescue game demos FirstNet potential
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With the help of a computer game created by the OhioFirst.Net program, first responders, policymakers and ordinary citizens alike can experience the increased situational awareness that FirstNet's future public safety broadband network will deliver.

The Next Generation Firefighter game shows the difference between how firefighters use data currently available and how their safety and effectiveness increases when that data can be displayed in a smart helmet as a result of FirstNet's high-speed networking, according to FirstNet's blog post .

The multi-level game demonstrates firefighters navigating through a structural fire in two scenarios: one where the player attempts a rescue without any additional information; and another where a player's smart helmet can tap into integrated real-time mapping, instructions from dispatch, blueprints and building data as well as thermal imagining.

Kelly Castle, the OhioFirst.Net program manager who came up with the concept, said the key to developing the game was having team members already equipped with the relevant expertise. "It is not like just producing a video or creating a PowerPoint. It really requires a specialized skill set," she said in the post.

The game's software was built by Televate LLC for the state of Ohio with funds from the Commerce Department's State and Local Implementation Grant Program, which provides resources to spread awareness about the potential of the nationwide public safety broadband network for first responders and to encourage adoption of FirstNet.

The video game is available for download for Windows systems and will be used for demonstrations at conferences and trade shows. If it catches on, OhioFirst.Net may consider adding different scenarios and use cases and possibly moving it to different platforms for mobile device play.

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